1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

holding this title had very few of these offices left—they were now the rights of persons holding quite different titles.

The economy of Bornu was a semi-specialized one. Almost everyone grew some crops, except a few cattle nomads, but at the same time during the long dry season people carried on craftwork, trade, and other specialized activities, such as providing medical or barbering services, or entertainment for those who were willing to pay. Everyone had access to new land, over which a person might establish ownership by his act of clearing it. If he used the land for only a few years, and stopped, then the land passed back into bush with no owner. Continued long-term use, especially that involving inheritance, meant that the owner could do with it what he pleased and transfer it to whomever he pleased. In other words the Kanuri had property concepts of usufruct or use-right, but they also had notions of freehold or private property in which land could be transferred by an individual after he had used it for a long time, or it had been passed on to his heirs.

The people raised specialized crops in the kingdom and practiced a myriad of different crafts. Each local craft was organized into a craft guild that helped set production and price standards under a local craft leader who benefited economically from his position and tried to pass it down through the male line. Markets, too, were under headmen and all goods to be traded went to weekly markets to which came thousands of people from the surrounding area.

Trade was accomplished by barter for the most part, although several forms of currency developed, which can be called special purpose or limited purpose money. For various kinds of trade, and within limits, certain objects—a man's robe, iron bars, slaves, horses, cotton rolls, Maria Theresa dollars, and other items—could be used. The trans-Saharan trader came to Bornu for slaves; he therefore demanded payment in slaves, and slaves became a kind of currency for this trade. People from Bornu traded south of Lake Chad for iron bars. These bars could be used to purchase anything in the markets southeast of Bornu where they were the chief export commodity. The same thing is true of cloth in the southern areas of Bornu where it was manufactured and where it was a major export item. Cloth rolls purchased any number of commodities from Bornu but only in that north-south trade. Cowrie shells came very late to Bornu (1820–1850) and never achieved the success as currency that they did elsewhere.

Another and important method of distribution of goods was carried out within the political system itself. Political superiors gave out enormous quantities of cloth, food, horses, and robes on particular holy days or special events such as rites of passage, or wrestling matches. On one occasion a witness in the early part of the century watched the Shehu give away more than a thousand men's robes and an equal number of bullocks and sheep. Although one would expect the leaders to give more than other men, they also served as a model for the population so that the amount of distribution actually carried on in this way must have been very great indeed.

Another important facet of the economy was foreign trade. Although the famous trans-Saharan caravans are supposed to have declined during the nineteenth century, by all accounts they were still of considerable importance for Bornu. Into Bornu came calico, cotton prints, fine silk, sword blades, writing paper, looking glasses, needles, razors, scissors, knives, cheap jewelry, and guns mostly from Eu-

44 goods, and European salt and sugar are also imported. Lastly,
438 kola nuts are not locally grown and must be imported.
439

[77] Of the 1477 sellers in the Geidam market, only 226 (15 per
[226] cent) sell imported items; 77 of these sell kola nuts, and this will be discussed separately; 70 sell cloth or clothing, traceable to the disappearance of weaving as a local craft when Western cloth first appeared; 46 are taborma. The remaining
44 33 sell salt, enamelware and rubber shoes. It is apparent
438 therefore that the Geidam market is essentially a local market, serving the local community which includes the town of Geidam itself and smaller villages within a radius of perhaps fifteen
[172] miles. Villagers come into Geidam on foot, on horse, with donkeys and with camels, bringing with them local produce, such as foodstuff or livestock and locally made wares, which they sell in the market, buying in turn the products made by Geidam craftsmen. Merchants selling in the Geidam market are all small-scale retailers, saborma, according to the Kanuri, who buy someplace and sell elsewhere at a profit. Many of these saborma transport their stock of goods from one weekly market to another, using a donkey or a camel. About twenty miles east of Geidam is the town of Digeltera, often called Sɔbdɔ (Saturday) because its market-day is Saturday. Other surrounding towns form loosely integrated market rings with alternating market days so that the itinerant saborma can visit them each
44 in turn with his goods. Since Geidam is reached by roads from
438 both Maiduguri and Nguru, goods imported from the West are
439

177 voted to production for export today than during any previous
439 period. The roles of those involved in this external trade
433 with the Western world have changed profoundly as this aspect of Kanuri economy grew in importance in this century.

177 Goods imported into Geidam from Western centers have
439 also affected Kanuri culture. The large quantities of cloth,
463 which represent the most important item imported, have brought
433 about the disappearance of Kanuri weaving and thus have led
[286] to the elimination of one craft group, the weavers. Other crafts have been affected to a lesser extent by the importation of other manufactured goods (enamelware, buckets, rubber shoes) but the craftsmen as a group have continued to make and sell their products and services, without any direct influence from Western culture.

177 In similar fashion, the Geidam market shows only slight
439 signs of the effects of contact with the West, and those en-
441 gaged in trade within the market-place are little affected
443 by the contact. This is in sharp contrast to tradesmen who are involved in external trade, where the effects of contact are pronounced. Those most involved are the canteen traders who deal directly with the European trading companies in Geidam. As a result of their success in dealing with agents of the Western world, they have become an important and wealthy group in the community.

[555]

177 Lastly, Western education has had its effect on social
871 stratification. Though individuals in Geidam who have received

262 economic and rural/urban status. In upper class households, food may
262 be taken regularly three, four, or even five times during a day, with
264 a larger variety in the items included. Thus in the household of an N.A. employee in Magumeri, there are four separate meals in one day, and sometimes five - (1) early in the morning just after rising, millet porridge and a plain soup is taken, plus a small course of bèlèn (milk, rice or wheat, and sugar); (2) at about nine a.m., a light meal of bèlèn, some cooked rice and soup, and/or milk; (3) at twelve noon, chicken and rice, then (4) at seven p.m., millet porridge. Often a light meal of chicken and rice or even some fresh vegetables in season
262 is eaten in mid-afternoon. Because of the much richer variety of foods available from all over Nigeria, as well as the outside world, in tins, bottles or dehydrated condition, the city diet is more various and also somewhat more expensive for everyone, except the most indigent,

Clothing

294 The importance of clothing and cloth to the Kanuri is clearly observable in Bornu. Singer sewing machines (pedal powered) are everywhere in the area, only the smallest hamlets being, at present, without them. In Magumeri, there were between six and eight constantly in use over a seventeen month period. On market day more machines appear from the city and surrounding towns, in the special tailors en-
441 closure at the market. When the cash crop is sold to the "scale" men, there is always a store of cloth kept by these buyers, who know that the peasant is very likely to purchase some textiles with his cash crop
286 receipt. Although there are very few words in the language for col-
192 our, different textiles or the same material at different phases of
[521] wear are discriminated. There is a plethora of words denoting the different kinds of materials; and news of new brands, price changes, and

• 286
[192] desirability characteristics take up much of the leisure time discus-
[521] sion among adult men. Cloth or clothing is also an integral part of
[431] gift giving at marriages, circumcisions and in maintaining superior/
[685] subordinate relationships. Thieves, knowing the liquid capital nature of cloth or clothing, always steal these items as well as money, and indeed more often, since it is more common for transportable capital
436 assets to be in the form of cloth or clothing than cash. Cloth was originally a form of currency, i.e. a measure of value, and even today these items are widely used as collateral when cash loans are taken
286 from neighbours or specialist money-lenders. Cloth and clothing as an
291 item of consumption thus has wide ramifications of meaning and desirability as an object of value to the Bornu population, and forms one of the principal expenditures in a Kanuri household.

291 The robes of men and women, their yardage, quality, workmanship, embellishment, and age, reflect structural differences in Kanuri society. Men wear uni-coloured robes or work shirts, and all men have at least one robe for special occasions. Long robes are often worn over a smaller long-sleeved body length shirt, and may or may not be embroidered with various designs, each having its own standard of excellence on an ascending scale reflected in price. Women wear a long-sleeved body length robe over a cloth wrapped around the body from the waist down. Without the robe this wrap-around is pulled up to cover the breasts as well, when outside the compound. To dress up, the wrap-around becomes longer and forms a train, which is carried over the arm, and a long piece of cloth is draped over the shoulders in a sari-like fashion. Women also vary more widely in their tastes, which range from several plain colours worn at once to prints (men very rarely wear prints).

291

291 NORMAL GARB--nude and covered parts of body; services of clothing (e.g., protection, vanity, modesty); standard costume; age and sex differences; seasonal variations; styles and fashions; description of individual garments; means of attachment and suspension (e.g., belt); etc. See also:

Cyclical trends in fashions 178
Sumptuary laws 434
Sexual modesty 834
Swaddling and infant attire 854

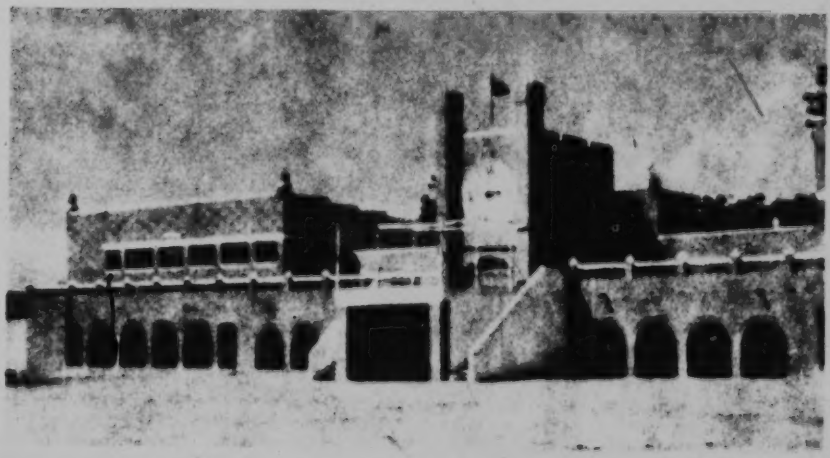
1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

[P. 3]

651
234
142
291
352
353
516

(Top) A district head in his reception room; behind him his clients are counting tax returns. The bags on the floor are shillings.

(Bottom) The palace of the Shehu of Bornu.



631
344

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

[p.4]

553
291
342

A naming ceremony—women sitting in front of the mother's hut. (Crowd includes Diana Cohen, wife of the author).

Horsemen saluting a chief in Magumeri.

541
231

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

Everyone knows where the boundaries lie between village areas, or between hamlets and other settlements, and there is plenty of land for expansion and for the wandering cattle nomads who traverse the area annually moving their cattle north and south with the coming and going of the rains.

The settlements are all made up of walled compounds and within these are the mud-walled houses with conical thatched roofs, or sometimes grass mat walls with thatched roofs. In the northeast of Bornu the people specialize in a bee-hive shaped house of bound thatch which can be picked up and moved and can reach a size of twenty to thirty feet in diameter, although ten to fifteen feet is more common. A compound is almost always rectangular in shape with mud or grass mat walls and internal partitions. There is only one entrance which is often a house with two doors so that there is a shelter at the doorway for people to gather and visit with the household head. The compounds in any settlement are always arranged in a "U"-shape with the open end towards the west and the closed end on the east. The arms of the U then form the north and south sides of the open plaza where all the major events of town take place. Although in very tiny settlements, big cities, or settlements that have lost a great many people, this U-shape is not often easy to discover, it can be seen by simply asking people where they have their central plaza. When this is pointed out, the questioner knows exactly where to look for the house of the senior political leader of the settlement since his household is always at the bottom of the U in the center facing west. Parenthetically, this means that when individuals or groups pray and bow down toward the east in the open plaza, which they often do, they face the doorway of their local political leader's compound.

Around the villages are fields of millet, the major food staple, guinea corn, ground-nuts, the major cash crop, and numerous specialized crops of vegetables or gourds that vary from place to place depending upon local conditions. Almost everybody does a little farming while goods not produced within the household itself are purchased at local weekly markets that dot the countryside in each of the major villages.

In their culture the Kanuri share ideas about religion, social organization, and subsistence patterns with many of the other peoples of the Western Sudan. Even esoteric items such as pre-pubescent boys' hair styles are shared across wide areas of the southern and central Sahara ranging as far away as Morocco. In their patterns of dress—workshirts and long ground-length robes for men, long shirts and saris for women—they again share many items with surrounding peoples as they do in their love of horses which give a man prestige unless he is one of the few in the cities that owns an automobile. Their language, Kanuri, is not related to other languages of Nigeria, but is shared and closely related to a large group of tongues called Central Saharan that ranges from the Tibesti highlands in northern Chad to Bornu in the southwest and the Darfur region in the modern nation of Sudan, in the southeast. It is a graceful language in which the verb comes at the end of the sentence as in Latin and in which there are many polite circumlocutions for saying things diplomatically. Thus if I wish to say a man is untrustworthy, I do not say it outright. Instead I say quietly that he has narrow eyes, which comes from the saying, "A man with narrow eyes has no shame," he lacks proper respect for his obligations to others. There are many greetings which are adjusted to social rank,

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

Clothing, like food, is in the hands of the household head although, and as in the case of food, he is always pressured to obtain and distribute more than he can afford. At harvest time, or major religious ceremonies during the year, and at celebrations of *rites de passage* by household members, new clothing is in order and is expected by everyone. Clients and subordinates in nearby households expect gifts of clothing as well. Wealthy men may find it necessary to purchase several hundred men's robes a year just to satisfy their many dependents; on the other hand, a normal peasant householder can usually get by annually with under a half a dozen for male household members including himself and a similar number of women's robes for his wives.

Household heads must also organize and pay for repairs to compound walls and sleeping huts, fuel and equipment for cooking fires, and kerosene for the lamps. They must supply as well the ladies of the household with money for their fortnightly hair styling, perfumes, pomade for rubbing on their skin, and kola nuts. When someone is sick, they must consult the religious practitioner and the native doctor who diagnose the case, start the necessary prayers, and sell charms to effect a cure. Besides all this they must enter into community life, go to the weddings, naming ceremonies of friends, and have these friends come to their own ceremonies. Each time they attend affairs they and their household members must give gifts to those responsible for the ceremony. The more a man gives and the more often he goes to such ceremonies, the more successful and wealthy and contact-laden he is reputed to be. Most people are prudent and do not go beyond their means. Indeed the Kanuri term for "spendthrift" translates literally as "one who goes to many ceremonies."

Consumption at the household level is organized by the household head and carried out under his guidance and control. He is constantly purchasing more so he can distribute it more generously to more people; yet for the ordinary household the bulk of the expenditure, roughly sixty percent of the household's earning power, is for food, and the next largest item is clothing, at about fifteen percent. This leaves approximately twenty-five percent of the household earning capacity to take care of everything in cash and kind beyond the simple necessities of food and clothing.[2]

Households as Producers

Kanuri production is tied traditionally to two interrelated factors in the physical and social environment of Bornu. These are, first, the geographical and ecological characteristics of the area, and secondly, the way in which agricultural and nonagricultural pursuits complement one another in the economy. The Bornu area has a short rainy season from June to September and crop production is carried out during these months. Planting begins about the time of the first rains, and the first hoeing takes place shortly afterward. The second hoeing is carried on from the beginning of October to the end of November. Each hoeing requires between two to three weeks' work and harvesting may take as long as a month to a month and a half. Between these periods, beyond occasional scrutiny to see that straying

[2] These data and much of the other material for this chapter were obtained (a) from detailed budget studies in a small sample of twenty-two rural households, and (b) from a less detailed survey of seventy-five rural households in three villages in the Magumeri area.

567 Mai; under the reign of the Shehus only slaves say "kemanyi"
576 to their masters and to the Shehu, and certain of the Shehu's
178 free-born kabuna address him in that way today.

576 A slave may be given from one master to another, and a slave may be freed at the will of his master. A man will call in witnesses to be present and note that he is giving such and
[673] such a slave his freedom. This may also be done in a will after a man's death, though he may not free all of his slaves in this fashion as this would be interpreted as seeking to disinherit one's descendants, which is forbidden by law. A man may also give a chir her freedom, and marry her as a regular wife if he so wishes.

596 The buying and selling of slaves has been prohibited in
178 this century, but the institution of slavery persists. Slaves,
[304] or rather susana, are still distinguished by their distinctive
[291] scars, and by their bare heads--a characteristic which is immediately noticeable since all free-born adult Kanuri males wear
[554] hats. The persistence of slavery, however, is clearly a function
369 of the need to attach one's self to the household of an important man, particularly in urban situations. This has always been a characteristic of Kanuri society, and it continues to be so today. The slave is no longer forced to remain in the position of slave, but the potential relationship is frequently actuated by slave and by master, and as long as each meets the expectations of the other in satisfactory fashion, the relationship is perpetuated. Furthermore the status of the slave was never that

As the sun set on Tuesday, April [GEIDAM] 30th, everyone looked
785 closely for the new moon which would mark the beginning of the
796 new month and the end of the fast. The sky was slightly cloudy
[805] and the sliver of the new moon could not be distinguished. The
[821] following day, therefore, would once again be a fast day. However, two boys came to the Alkali and swore on the Koran that they had seen the moon. In addition, it was announced over the radio that the moon had been seen in Enugu, so that the fast of Ramadan was in fact ended. Wednesday, instead of a fast day, was the festive Ngumari Ashembe (Ashem means fast), the great
796 festival marking the end of Ramadan. Throughout the night guns
[538] were shot off, and drumming and algator (a reed instrument) playing were continuous at the door of the Ajari. On Wednesday morning at nine o'clock a crowd of more than a thousand people gathered in an open area to the southeast of the town, where a
[291] large tent had been erected, for communal prayers. Everyone wore new gowns (kulugu) which had been given as presents for
[492] the holiday. The Ajia rode out to the place of prayer on horse, followed by all his men in their most brilliant robes. After the prayers, led by the Liman Ngumaribe, had ended, all strolled back to the town, and the Ajia and his men paraded back to the Ajari. At the chinna of the Ajari a large crowd had gathered, and the Alkali along with the various NA Malams were seated in chairs. The Ajia followed by his men then paraded the length of the dandal to the Ajari entrance. This they did twice, then Yerima Mustapha remained seated at the entrance while his kabuna rode in waves toward the Ajari holding aloft their swords and

[GEIDAM]

*177 276 273 [784] European-style beer, is forbidden to strict Moslems. Smoking cigarettes is not forbidden by religious edict, but is generally avoided except by adolescents and young men. In place of cigarettes, and serving much the same function, all Kanuri chew kola nuts. It can be seen from Table XXII that only eight individuals smoke cigarettes; two others smoked in the past but have given it up. Only three individuals admit to drinking beer, while three others did drink in the past. Those who smoke or drink can be found dispersed throughout six of the groups, with no significant clustering of cases appearing in any one group. In two groups, however, no individuals are to be found [792] [441] who either smoke or drink. These are the Koranic Malams and the Canteen Operators. The reasons for the strictness of the Koranic Malams is obvious. The Canteen Operators are somewhat different in their motivation. They would appear to adhere closely to traditional norms in these areas.

*177 • 291 *829 The last items involving Western material goods concern the wearing of European-made shoes and European-style trousers, presented in Table XXIII. Most of the individuals in the sample have worn European-made shoes at one time or another, and a number of others state that although they do not have them they would wear them if they had shoes. Only seven individuals categorically state that they would not wear European-made shoes, and these appear in four groups: Koranic Malams, [792] *[634] Kabuna, Craftsmen, and Talaka. The general attitude against *[463] wearing European-style trousers, however, is much stronger. *[565]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 276]

[GEIDAM]

Table XXIII

*177 *291 *829 *565 *554 *463 14, 15. Wearing European Items of Clothing: shoes, trousers.

	European shoes:			European trousers:		
	has them	doesn't have but would wear	wouldn't wear	has them	would wear	wouldn't wear
Aristocracy	4	1	-	2	1	2*a
Koranic Malams	1	1	1	-	-	3*b
Canteen Operators	5	1	-	-	-	6
NA Malams	6	-	-	4*c	-	2
Kabuna	2	2	2	-	3	3
Craftsmen	3	1	2	1	-	5
Talaka	5	1	2	3	1	4
Low-status individuals	4	-	-	1	1	2
Totals:	30	7	7	11	6	27

*a Malam Jalo said that he wore European trousers long ago when he was a school-teacher but that he wouldn't wear them now.

*b Liman Habib, the young Liman, said that he wouldn't wear them because they don't go with a Kanuri gown (kulugu).

*c Malam Kasam, the veterinary, stated that he occasionally wears them but doesn't like them; prefers Kanuri trousers (yangai).

Malam Ali Malami, the dispenser, wears European trousers as his work pants.

2:Rosman E-5 (1956-1957) 1966 MS14 Kanuri MS14

BEIDAN

Those who object to the trousers make up 61 per cent of the sample, while those who objected to wearing shoes are only 16 per cent of the sample. A majority of the NA Malams state that they wear European-style trousers, but several of their responses indicate that wearing trousers is related to the nature of their work, and one, the Veterinary, states that he wears them though he dislikes them. One Aristocrat notes that he wore trousers in the past when he worked as a school-teacher but does not wear them now that he no longer does that sort of work. The Craftsmen, the Koranic Malams, and the Canteen Operators give a very high proportion of responses indicating refusal to wear trousers. The first two of these, the Craftsmen and the Koranic Malams, also included individuals who were unwilling to wear shoes, so that their responses to the two questions are rather consistent. However, the Canteen Operators show a complete reversal. All of them said that they either had or would wear European-made shoes, but not a single member of that group would wear European-style trousers. There is clearly a difference in the attitude of the sample towards wearing European-made shoes and European-style trousers. The majority have no objection to wearing shoes but do object to wearing trousers; the group which is most sensitive to the difference between the two items of clothing is the Canteen Operators. They choose with the majority with respect to both shoes and trousers, but in both cases they do so to a man, as if to indicate that they as a group exemplify the norms of correct conduct more than any other group in the sample.

286 [192] desirability characteristics take up much of the leisure time discus- [521] sion among adult men. Cloth or clothing is also an integral part of [431] gift giving at marriages, circumcisions and in maintaining superior/ [685] subordinate relationships. Thieves, knowing the liquid capital nature of cloth or clothing, always steal these items as well as money, and indeed more often, since it is more common for transportable capital 436 assets to be in the form of cloth or clothing than cash. Cloth was originally a form of currency, i.e. a measure of value, and even today these items are widely used as collateral when cash loans are taken 286 from neighbours or specialist money-lenders. Cloth and clothing as an 291 item of consumption thus has wide ramifications of meaning and desirability as an object of value to the Bornu population, and forms one of the principal expenditures in a Kanuri household.

291 The robes of men and women, their yardage, quality, workmanship, embellishment, and age, reflect structural differences in Kanuri society. Men wear uni-coloured robes or work shirts, and all men have at least one robe for special occasions. Long robes are often worn over a smaller long-sleeved body length shirt, and may or may not be embroidered with various designs, each having its own standard of excellence on an ascending scale reflected in price. Women wear a long-sleeved body length robe over a cloth wrapped around the body from the waist down. Without the robe this wrap-around is pulled up to cover the breasts as well, when outside the compound. To dress up, the wrap-around becomes longer and forms a train, which is carried over the arm, and a long piece of cloth is draped over the shoulders in a sari-like fashion. Women also vary more widely in their tastes, which range from several plain colours worn at once to prints (men very rarely wear prints).

• 291

In a culture where houses are often extremely similar from person to person, within any one strata of society, clothing tends to give expression to individual tastes and desires. On a broader scale, difference in dress reflects class divisions and higher and lower echelons of the status dimensions discussed in previous chapters, giving cultural support and emphasis to these social distinctions. Thus on a normal work day in Magumeri these differences are readily apparent.

511 The actual amount of expenditure for clothing is a function of income and social status and seems to range for many of the peasant population (over two-thirds of the budgets) between three and thirteen pounds sterling per annum for each male household head. If we take £9.0.0. as a rough median value per rural male householder, the calculated rural expenditure for food (£41.0.0) and clothing (£9.0.0) is about £50.0.0 per year, in cash and kind (translated into cash values at local Bornu prices).

[562] The following table, taken from nineteen of the more reliable budgets, illustrates the relationship between occupation and clothing expenditures, as well as pointing up the fact that most women's clothes are bought by men. The extremes of the table are: (1) a District Head who buys a larger amount and a better quality of clothing as a mark of his high status, as well as giving away many gifts of robes to his followers; (2) a servant of the District Head who buys no clothing at all, since the D.H. supplies him with his needs; (3) a wealthy trader from the city who utilizes clothing expenditures, among other things, to raise his social status commensurate to his recent rise in wealth.

6: Buchanan K-5 (ca. 1952)1953. MS12 Hausa MS12

Tiv FF57

Fulani MS11

Kanuri MS14

Nupe FF62

H
142
144
291
516

T
142
291
482

K
144
291
301

N
142
144
291

F
144
291
301

FIG. 11—Hausa villagers, Zaria Province. The Hausa are numerically the major tribal group in the Region; racially, they show a predominance of savanna Negro elements.

FIG. 12—A pagan hunter of the Jos Plateau. These primitive people appear to have some Negrito elements.

FIG. 13—Nupe villagers, Niger Province. This group from one small village reflects racial complexity of parts of the Region—tall savanna Negro, stocky forest Negro, and person of Arab descent.

FIG. 14—Tiv of Benue Province. The Tiv, predominant people of the Middle Belt, appear to have racial affinities with the peoples of the southeastern forest rather than with the peoples of the northern plains.

FIG. 15—A Kanuri of Borno Province. The Kanuri are a hybrid group, of mixed Negro-Caucasian origin.

FIG. 16—Fulani of the Bauchi region. Fulani ancestry is Caucasian, reflected in brown skin, wavy hair, and narrow nose. Today they show results of intermarriage with Negro neighbors.